



Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science Program Advisory Working Group (RSPA WG) Membership Update

A Presentation to the
NOAA Science Advisory Board

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Purpose

Informational update

- Review of RSPAWG Membership approach
- Review of RESTORE Act Background and Science Program overview
- Update on selection of RSPAWG members
- Questions and Discussion



Approved Terms of Reference

- Provide informed regional advice on GOM RESTORE related ecosystem science and monitoring to both the Administrative Body and the Oversight Board for implementation of NOAA's RESTORE science program
- Assist NOAA's RESTORE program in establishing plans, assessing progress, and reviewing priorities
- Provide a formal forum for the discussion and coordination of RESTORE related science outside of NOAA's program
- Coordinate with other SAB Working Groups, specifically the Ecosystem Science and Management Working Group (ESMWG)



RSPA WG Membership

The RSPA WG shall be composed 15-20 individuals from 3 groups of outstanding scientists and leaders with a broad interest in Gulf of Mexico RESTORE related activities:

Group 1 – Representatives of science related organizations in the Gulf of Mexico

Group 2 - Ex-officio members representing other funding organizations

Group 3 - A rotating group of external subject matter experts



Membership Approach

- Representational members were solicited directly by letter from the SAB to the agencies and organizations listed
 - The SAB requested that individuals who serve on the RSPAWG have a credible background in science.
- Subject matter experts (SMEs) were solicited through a Federal Register Notice put out by NOAA that identified specific areas of expertise sought.
 - Individuals will be selected by a committee consisting of appropriate NOAA staff and SAB members.
 - SMEs do not have to conduct their research in the Gulf of Mexico.



Background

RESTORE Act of 2012

- Section 1604 authorizes NOAA to establish a Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring, and Technology Program (NOAA RESTORE Act Science Program)

“...to carry out research, observation, and monitoring to support, to the maximum extent practicable, the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem, fish stocks, fish habitat, and the recreational, commercial, and charter fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico.”



Legislative Requirements



- Coordinate with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Consult with Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC)
- Priority shall be given to integrated, long-term projects that address management needs
- Funds may not be used for
 - any existing or planned research led by NOAA,
 - implementation or initiation of new NOAA regulations, and
 - development of or approval of a fisheries catch share program



Oversight and Responsibility

- Administratively located within NOAA's National Ocean Service in the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science with cross-agency participation
 - Gulf-based director
 - Program staff from across NOAA and USFWS
- Internal oversight board of senior NOAA and USFWS science leadership
- **External advisory working group with NOAA's Science Advisory Board (RSPA WG)**
- Independent external review board will also assess program's effectiveness every 3-5 years



Purpose & Principles (selected)

Purpose: Achieve an *integrative, holistic understanding of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem* and support, to the maximum extent practicable, restoration efforts and the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem

Principles:

- An ecosystem approach
- Integrate and build on existing research, monitoring, and modeling efforts and plans
- Leverage partnerships
- Work within a management and policy framework developed with other entities in the Gulf
- Design a scalable and modular approach



Goals (proposed)

- Support Healthy, Diverse & Resilient Coastal Habitats
- Promote Healthy, Diverse & Sustainable Living Coastal & Marine Resources
- Support Sustainably Managed Fisheries
- Support Healthy, Sustainable, & Resilient Coastal Communities able to adapt to a changing environment
- Support Healthy and Well-managed Offshore Environments



Focus Areas

To achieve the broad categories articulated in the RESTORE Act, research shall focus on four areas:

1. “State of health” for the Gulf, incorporating environmental, socio- economic, and human well-being benefits and elements
2. Integrated analysis and synthesis of data
3. Ecosystem processes, functioning and connectivity studies through integrative field/laboratory efforts
4. Holistic approaches to observing and monitoring



Coordination

- **Deepwater Horizon related science and restoration initiatives:**
 - Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative
 - National Academy of Sciences Gulf Program
 - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
 - Natural Resources Damage Assessment
 - Other RESTORE Act programs
 - State Centers of Excellence
 - Science and monitoring funded by states and Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council
 - **The NOAA Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science Program**
- **Existing federal and state research programs**



Selection Committee Update



- ✓ Terms of Reference approved at July SAB meeting
- ✓ Invitation letters sent to representational working group members (Group 1)
- ✓ Solicitation to ex-officio members made directly (Group 2)
- ✓ Federal Register Notice posted for nominees of SMEs (Group 3)
- ✓ Letters sent to professional societies for nominations of SMEs(Group 3)



RSPAWG Member Groups



Group 1: *Seven members representing science related organizations in the Gulf of Mexico and called out in the actual RESTORE ACT*

1. Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
 - Mr. Jeffery Rester, Member, GSMFC
2. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
 - Dr. Carrie Simmons, Deputy Director, GMFMC

RESTORE Centers of Excellence for the states of :

3. Florida
4. Alabama
5. Mississippi
6. Louisiana
7. Texas



RSPAWG Member Groups



Group 2: *Four ex-officio members representing other funding organizations*

1. Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative
2. National Academy of Sciences
3. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
 - Dr. Pasquale F. Roscigno
4. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
 - Dr. Pamela Plotkin



RSPAWG Member Groups

Group 3: *A rotating group of external subject matter experts (SMEs)*

- Individuals appointed for one 3-year term, which is renewable for one additional 3-year term.
- Subject areas represented might include, as examples
 - Marine/estuarine ecosystem-based modeling
 - Ecological effects of hypoxia
 - Deep sea microbial ecology
 - Harmful algal blooms
 - Coastal nutrient management
 - Marine/estuarine geology
 - Applications of science in marine/estuarine management



RSPAWG Member Groups



Group 3: *A rotating group of external subject matter experts (SMEs)*

- 37 nominees from Federal Register Notice
- 9 thus far chosen for consideration
- Still missing areas of expertise
 - Social sciences/economics
 - Physical oceanography
 - Observing systems
 - Marine mammals
- Selection team reserves the right to nominate others on their own – SAB members are encouraged to do the same



Next Steps

- Selection Committee will move forward to
 - Select SMEs
 - Identify ex-officio and representational members
- The representatives for the Centers of Excellence will be identified after those have been established
- Committee expects to have selection of SMEs and ex-officios completed by end of the year
- Representational members soon after as permitted by RESTORE Act processes



Questions and Discussion



- *restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov*

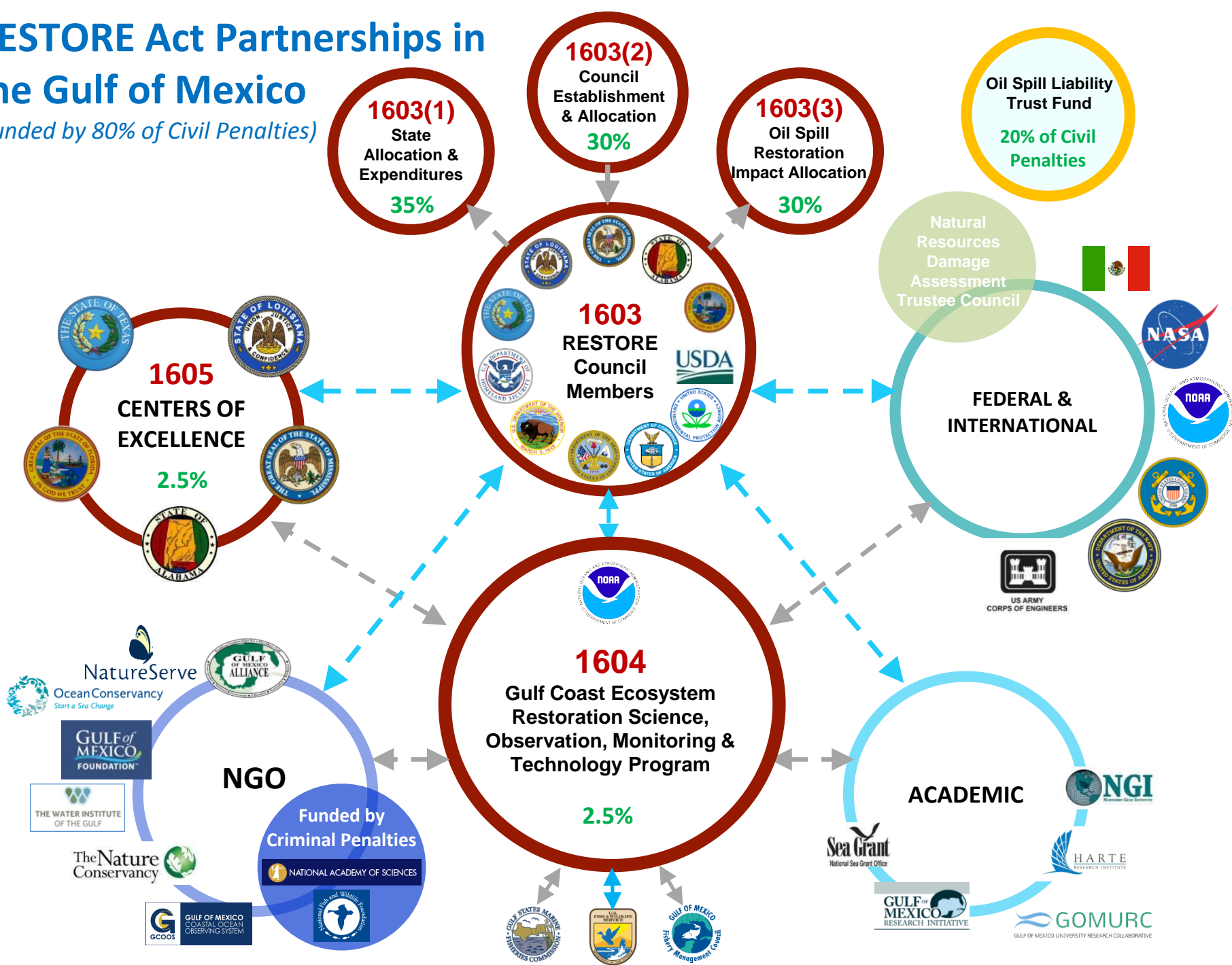


Backup Slides



- *[if applicable]*

(Funded by 80% of Civil Penalties)



Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring, and Technology Program

(RESTORE Act Science Program)

Planning and Execution Organizational Structure

